



ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 4 AUGUST 2019

Welcome to ZAGP News

Welcome to Issue 4 (August 2019) of ZAGP News, the monthly newsletter for the European Union (EU) funded, Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP). The newsletter is one of the channels for the sharing of programme information and updates of activities across the different provinces of Zimbabwe.

This month, the focus is on the Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) project led by World Vision Zimbabwe.

With the national herd estimated at 5,2 million, the beef sector in Zimbabwe faces a number challenges that have severely hampered production and productivity within the sector.

These include animal diseases, high costs of inputs and services, lack of appropriate funding packages, extreme

weather patterns due to climate change and lack of appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, under resourced government service providers have resulted in poor and inadequate extension services. Additionally, pastures have depleted while water bodies are drying up in most parts of the country, leaving animals fighting for survival.

We highlight how the BEST project approaches and innovations seek to tackle these challenges head-on, and create a vibrant beef value chain in Zimbabwe.

The newsletter also provides updates on the other projects being implemented under ZAGP across the different value chains and support project in various provinces of the country. We welcome your feedback on this and other issues of ZAGP News.

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“Cattle Business Centres (CBCs) will create hubs of production, extension and marketing activities for beef farmers”.

ZAGP NEWS FOCUS

Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST)



[Listen to the Podcast by the Project Coordinator, Mark Benzon, providing an overview of BEST](#)

Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) is being implemented in five provinces of Zimbabwe: Manicaland, Masvingo, Mashonaland Central, Midlands and Matabeleland North. World Vision Zimbabwe (WV) in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH), Sustainable Agriculture Technology (SAT), are the implementing partners in collaboration with the Livestock and Meat Advisory Council (LMAC) and Zimbabwe Agricultural Development Trust (ZADT).

The project seeks to create a robust, competitive beef value chain (BVC) that promotes enhanced trade, employment creation, food security, and inclusive green economic growth by 2023. Beneficiaries of the project include 24,900 small to medium beef producers and 100 emerging commercial farmers.

Innovation models under BEST project include:

Cattle Business Centre (CBC) Model

BEST project activities are centred around the CBC model which acts as a livestock agribusiness hub. The intended

action will construct 10 main CBCs and 50 satellite CBCs in its 10 implementing districts. CBCs will be owned by the community but managed by private sector partners on a fee for service basis.

Farmers will access extension, bulling, heifer replacement, artificial insemination (where appropriate), input and output marketing services and financial access among others at the CBCs.

Nurture Finance (NF) Model

The Nurture Finance (NF) business model is a holistic approach integrating various commercial aspects of the BVC. Nurture Stockmens Academy was established to empower small farmers with the knowledge to generate a return on their primary asset - cattle - and make the transition from cattle keeping to commercial beef production through a training and mentorship programme.

Nurture Finance empowers qualifying farmers by availing loans to buy cattle to embark on this commercialization process.



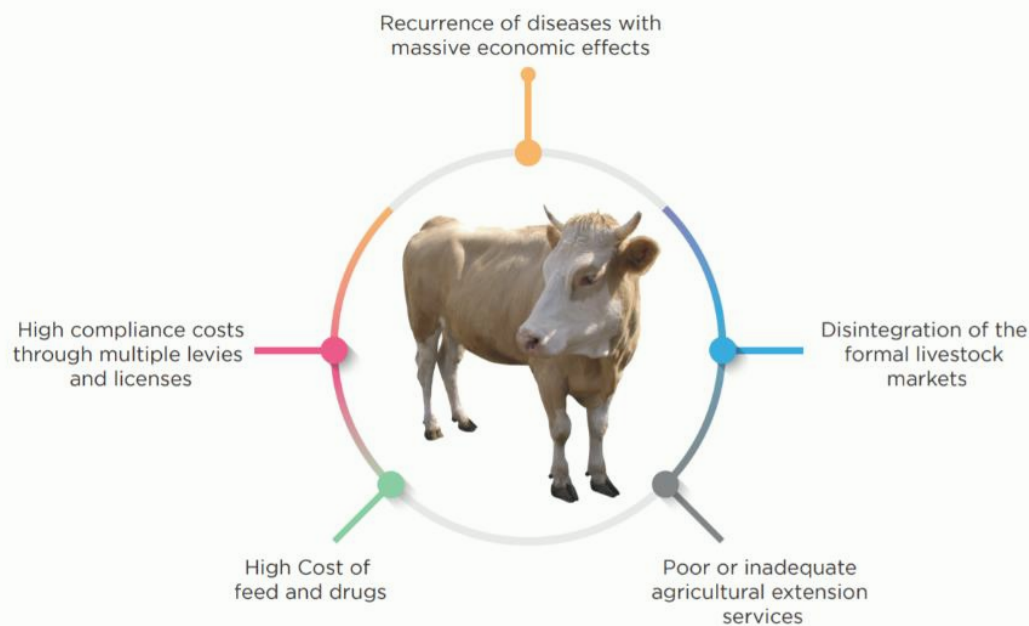
A small-scale model of the Cattle Business Center (CBC).

BEST will capacitate NF by supplying heifers to expand the number of commercial farmer participants up to 100.

In turn, each of the commercial farmers will train and mentor 10 Emerging Commercial Farmers (ECFs) who, after intensive training in business and financial literacy, may become eligible for a NF cattle loan – using their cattle as collateral.

In this way a total 1,000 ECFs will be exposed to and have the opportunity to embrace commercial beef farming methods and start to grow their own commercial herds.

Challenges and bottlenecks in the Zimbabwe beef value chain being addressed by BEST



The beef value chain in Zimbabwe is dogged by a myriad of challenges. Chief among these is the recurrence of diseases with massive economic effects such as Foot and Mouth disease (FMD), as well as other tick borne diseases in recent years.

Tick borne diseases, in particular Theileriosis (January Disease), have resulted in massive losses of cattle in recent years. Inconsistent supply of state sponsored dipping services to communal farmers has resulted in the rise and prevalence of Theileriosis which has seriously affected cattle, mostly in Mashonaland provinces.

BEST will strive to ensure a mind-set shift for farmers from the subsistence approach relying on Government for services to a more commercial approach where they take responsibility for the health and welfare of their own animals. This will ensure that farmers put high commercial value on their animals and therefore are willing to invest in their upkeep.

High compliance costs are a major concern for beef producers. Multiple levies and licenses required to transact within the beef value chain add significantly to the cost of doing business.

The project in collaboration with Livestock and Meat Advisory Council (LMAC), will advocate for a favourable policy environment to ensure a viable beef sector.

BEST will also facilitate private and public sector led farmer trainings to bridge the challenge of appropriate extension services that are not easily accessible to smallholder farmers. Extension trainings will cover good animal husbandry practices so that farmers are fully informed on how to handle and care for their animals.

The trainings will also cover animal health management, breed improvement, fodder production, cow and calf management and pen fattening methods and techniques.

Another challenge within the beef value chain is the disintegration of the formal livestock markets.

Most district councils no longer hold regular livestock auctions and this has left farmers vulnerable to middlemen who offer low prices for cattle. The project will promote the resumption of consistent and competitive markets at district level by linking farmers to formal cattle markets.

Over the past three months, cost of stock feeds and drugs have trebled and are likely to continue to escalate. Consequently, farmers are not able to buy stock feeds to supplement their animals during the lean season.

On-farm fodder production efforts promoted by the project. Farmers will be encouraged to grow their own fodder crops such as velvet beans, sun hemp and lab among others and produce low cost feed formulations.

Information and Communications Technologies for Development (ICT4D)



Gokwe women farmers in consultation for the development of Kurima Mari Beef mobile application.

The ICT4D component will play a pivotal role in supporting extension services in the BEST project. Tailor made information technology innovations will be embedded in project activities to ensure successful achievement of project deliverables.

The ICT4D unit has a key mandate of developing digital solutions through software applications and communication tools for farmers to access mobile based pluralistic and interactive extension services. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) is leading the ICT4D component under the project and the organisation has a proven track history of developing agricultural ICT based solutions.

Under the BEST project, the ICT4D unit will be developing innovations such as the Livestock Information Management System, Kurima Mari Beef mobile application and the digital Stockman Academy. Formative assessments of the proposed ICT4D solutions have been conducted and used to develop concept notes which will form the basis of system design. Farmer consultative meetings have been conducted in Gokwe and Umguza districts with the aim of developing the Kurima Mari Beef mobile application.



DRY SEASON PREPAREDNESS: The Rationale Behind Irrigated Pasture Development. A Case for Balu Estate and Lapachi Irrigation Scheme.

BEST project seeks to create a comprehensive beef value chain which networks across private sector, government and rural communities. In light of this, BEST will construct centre pivot irrigation systems which will be used for all year round pasture production. This intervention will be done at Balu Estate in Umguza District in Matabeleland North and Lapachi Irrigation scheme in Mwenezi District of Masvingo.

The period August to November is characterised by loss in nutritional value of natural pastures. Without supplementary feeding, the nutrient supply from natural pasture is far less than the nutrient demands of the animals for maintenance. This is most severe in communal grazing lands, which lack grazing management plans, with risks of veld fires, increased exposure to droughts and compounded by increased distances travelled to access water and feed in the dry season.

Irrigated pastures can provide an alternative to expensive commercial stock feeds and allow deliberate choice of nutritive pastures to be grown, timely harvesting and subsequent optimization of animal performance.

Nutritional deficiencies are associated with low fertility, increased abortions, poor growth and low carcass grades. It is possible to create quality pastures that beef cattle can consume during the lean season as well as providing a food source for backgrounding prior to undertaking pen fattening. BEST, in collaboration with private sector partners, is developing 90 hectares of arable pasture land at Balu and Lapachi.

The sites will establish fodder banks for the surrounding communities for pen fattening, survival feeding and priority feeding. At Balu Estate, to date 60 hectares of land have been cleared and a centre pivot irrigation system will be installed.



Land preparation underway at Balu Estate, Umguza district.

At Lapachi, 30 hectares of land have been prepared with support from Tongaat Hulett and SABI Meats. More than 500 households are expected to benefit from these interventions.

In Mwenezi, the project will draw from the largely underutilized Mwenezana dam on the Mwenezi river.

At Balu, a perennial dam will be tapped to develop the pastureland. Increased access to high nutrient feeds is one fundamental objective of the BEST project.

PROJECT UPDATES

Dairy Value Chain Project Launched



Hon Air Chief Marshal Perrance Shiri (Retired), the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement, giving the keynote address at the launch.



The launch event was attended by at least 200 people including dairy farmers, farmers' associations, government officials, and the private sector.

The Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future project was officially launched on 17 July 2019 in Nyanga district, in Manicaland Province. The EURO seven million project is being implemented by We Effect, in partnership with the Zimbabwe Association of Dairy Farmers (ZADF), Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) and Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT) launched the project. At least 300 people attended, including dairy farmers, farmers' associations, government officials, and the private sector.

Speaking during the launch, Hon. Air Chief Marshal Perrance Shiri (Retired), the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement, said the launch of the project had come at an opportune time, as government was working on strategies to revitalize the dairy sector.

"I believe this launch has been organised at the right time when the Government is pursuing a number of growth initiatives in the dairy sector as a strategy to improve milk quantity and quality in Zimbabwe", said Minister Shiri.

Minister Shiri highlighted the constraints hampering dairy production in Zimbabwe as inadequate supply of feedstuffs, diseases and parasites, droughts, and feeding systems. He noted that low level of management, climate, land tenure, poor soil fertility, access to services and inputs, low adoption of improved

technologies, marketing and limited access to energy are also contributory factors to smallholder dairy production constraints.

"It is important to critically analyse dairy production and processing constraints and devise pertinent and practical strategies to alleviate the problems and improve dairy production in Zimbabwe", he said.

Goran Forssen, the We Effect Country Representative, reported that the project is about increasing the production of milk in Zimbabwe from a current level of 75 million litres to 120 million litres per year and increasing the participation by small-scale farmers, especially women, and youth in the dairy value chain.

Presenting during the launch, Dr Edson Chifamba, the Project Coordinator, said the project recently concluded a national milk mapping exercise carried out between May and June 2019.

"As a result of the mapping exercise, we now know the traditional milk areas in Zimbabwe and we have identified at least 33 districts where the project will be implemented. The projects target districts were identified through milk densities, dairy cow numbers and distribution, biophysical characteristics and dairy infrastructure.

PROJECT UPDATES

Set up of the Virtual Agriculture Centre of Excellence (V-ACE)

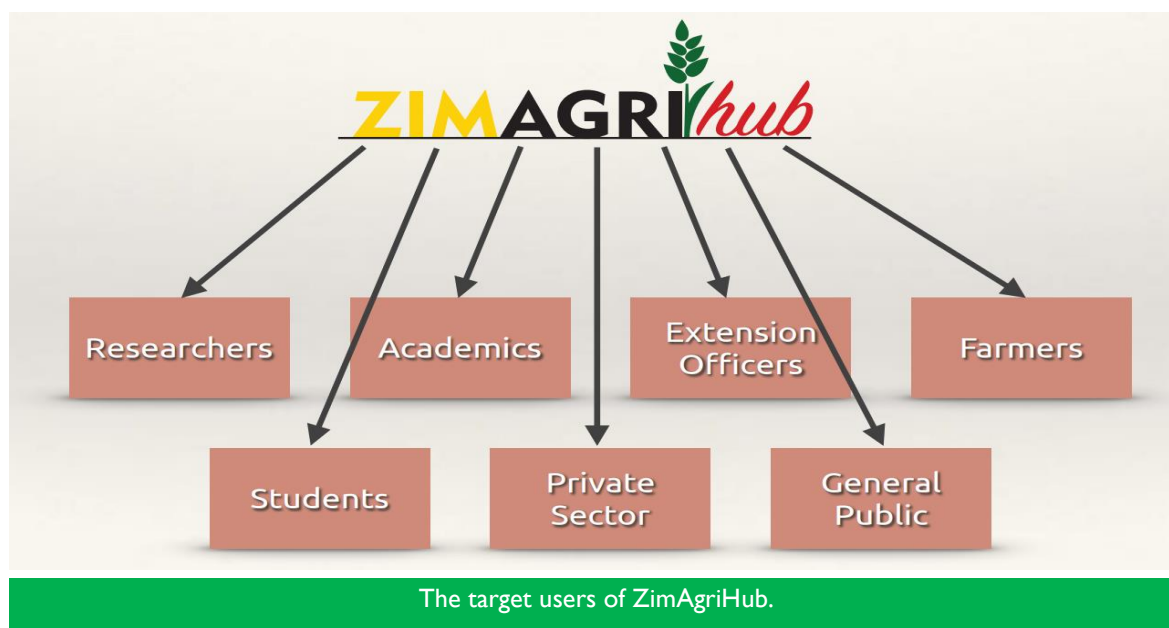
Zimbabwe Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Services (ZAKIS) has engaged Hatfield Consultants and Mindq, for the development of the V-ACE. The two companies have been instrumental in the set up and running of the CCARDESA Knowledge Hub <http://www.ccardesa.org/saaiiks-knowledge-hub>. The intention is to leverage on existing investments in building of knowledge hubs.

The purpose of the V-ACE is to consolidate all agriculture related information to enable collaboration between research, education and extension. In line with this, ZAKIS has facilitated the setup of a communications and learning unit (CLU) within the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement (MoLAWCRR) that is currently being collaboratively run by the representatives from research, education and extension, with technical assistance from a Communications Officer seconded to the Ministry by ZAKIS.

To date, there has been consensus that V-ACE requires a working name and an agreement has been reached on naming it ZimAgriHub. The image below demonstrates the **ZimAgriHub** target users. Starting with development of content management guidelines, the system will allow multiple roles and access levels, with the primary goal being free access to information. An easy-to-use, one or two step approval process/workflow for publishing appropriate content will be implemented, allowing content contributors to upload content. Content publishers will check and publish for public consumption.

What does the Virtual Centre of Excellence Do?

- Links researchers, educationists and extensionists on one interactive platform
- Provides online access via smartphone and computer
- Accessible to students
- Showcases work being done by various entities in the research, education and extension field, beyond the physical Agricultural Centres of Excellence (ACE) sites
- Provides vehicle for feedback loops from farmers and other actors
- Managed and coordinated by Government with potential Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)
- Ensures central access to project results across a range of government and donor projects, e.g., LFSP, ZRBF, USAID FFP, ZAGP CGIAR Centres etc.



PROJECT UPDATES**Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE)****Inception Meetings**

The VALUE Consortium held inception meetings in Matobo and Lupane districts in Matabeleland South and North respectively, for the goat value chain to build consensus with the key stakeholders on the operational framework of the action. A participatory beneficiary selection process in Matobo district followed the inception meetings and the Agritex officers are playing a lead role in facilitating this activity.

Goat Improvement Centres

Project partners in the goat value chain developed plans for Goat Improvement Centres (GICs) based on the needs and priorities of the smallholder goat producers and building on the experiences from the Crop and Livestock Improvement Centres (CLICs) which were established under the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) initiatives. The plans were developed with expert assistance from Grasslands and Matopo Research Institutes. The GICs are physical hubs, which will act as “One Stop Service Centres” for the goat farmers, and 12 GICs will be established in the participating districts.

Among other services, the GICs will be used as demonstration plots, breeding and extension services as well as marketing of goats. Some of the components of the GICs include a one-hectare fodder garden, race, pens, office, stock feed and veterinary drug storerooms.

Goat Holding Centres

VALUE partners convened a meeting with Matopos Research Institute to deliberate on the location and technical set up of the proposed Goat Holding Centre (GHC). The GHCs are part of the broader effort to develop strategic infrastructure for marketing which will facilitate a transition from individual goat sales to bulky marketing by farmer groups. The GHCs will have a dip tank, feeding pens, auction facilities, offices and drug stores that will assist the farmers in the collective marketing of goats.

Certification standards on goat breeding

In line with the project goal of empowering goat producers to commercialise their operations, a meeting was held with the Goat Breeders Association of Zimbabwe to discuss the development of the certification standards on goat breeding.

Inclusive Poultry Value Chain (IPVC)**Call for Expression of Interest for the Integrators**

The IPVC partners commenced the selection process for value chain integrators with the launch of the Call for Expression of Interest for the Integrators advertised in the local newspapers. Information sessions were also conducted in each of the five IPVC project areas (Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, Masvingo and Mutare) to explain the specific project roles to the interested actors.

Poultry Value Chain Analysis (VCA)

The mission of the Value Chain Analyst has been completed. The local team will be proceeding to finalise the required data collection for the VCA report.

Mapping and Baseline Survey

The tools for the mapping and the baseline exercises have been developed and the enumerators have been selected and trained. The two exercises will be carried out during the month of August. From this activity the project will be able to validate initial proposal findings and activities in respect to the current status of the poultry value chain.

As part of the mapping tools the project is developing a mobile application that will be used by farmers and value chain actors to register. Once they register onto the application, they will be mapped.

PROJECT UPDATES

SAFE Project National and Provincial Inception Meetings

The Transforming Zimbabwe's animal health and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS)/ Food safety systems for the future (SAFE) project conducted four successful inception meetings across the country from 23 to 31 July 2019. The purpose of the meetings was to present the project details, activities, expected results and milestones. The inception meetings also aimed to raise awareness of the commencement of the SAFE project among the key stakeholders at national, provincial and district level.

The four inception meetings were held as follows; Harare, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central Provinces – 23 July; Mashonaland East and Manicaland Provinces – 25 July; Masvingo and Midlands Provinces – 30 July and

and Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and South Provinces – 31 July.

The discussions held provided opportunities to fine-tune the project approaches, activities and deliverables given the current environment. In addition, the meetings provided a platform for networking and collaboration.

Outputs of the meetings

- Confirmation of the key SAFE project stakeholders,
- Additional gaps identified for incorporation in to the SAFE project interventions
- Endorsement of the SAFE project by the key stakeholders for implementation support



The SAFE inception meetings were attended by stakeholders at national, provincial and district levels.

Coordination Platform and Farmers' Unions Strengthening

The Technical Assistance to the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (TA-ZAGP) has as part of its mandate the strengthening of various "players" around the agricultural market systems in Zimbabwe. It has started with two key institutions – The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement (MoLAWCRR) and the Farmers' Unions, working on the Coordination Platform and Farmers Union Strengthening initiatives.

Coordination Platform

Zimbabwe has several development partners, NGOs, projects and companies operating in the country, particularly in the agricultural sphere. To ensure that the highest levels of efficiency, there is need to come up with effective coordination mechanisms.

Currently the major stakeholders are not fully aware of what each organisation is working on or planning.

This causes poor information flow, duplication of interventions and weak institutional memory, in both the public and private sectors, resulting in reduced impact, duplications and ineffective resource utilisation.

The MoLAWCRR requested assistance in improving the coordination of agriculture activities in Zimbabwe. The first steps to improving coordination are having correct information and knowing how to use it.

To address these first two points, two personnel from the Directorate of Policy, Strategy and Trade under the MoLAWCRR have been sent to a Monitoring and Evaluation course in South Africa. At the same time an on-line coordination platform is being built so that the MoLAWCRR can keep track of who is doing what and where, in the agricultural sector. Version 1.0 of the online Coordination Platform has been developed and is under review.

Farmers' Unions Strengthening

Farmers' unions requested assistance in improving their abilities to provide services to their members.

A few years ago, Zimbabwe had very strong farmers' unions. Agricultural crops and commodities were often sold to marketing boards who levied charges on the sales and remitted some of the funds to unions. This situation has largely disappeared. Farmers' unions are no longer offering marketing services to farmers, the sector is no longer dominated by a few thousand very large commercial farmers and markets are not structured in a way that levies can generate funds for unions.

Initiatives in the area of strengthening farmers' unions have tended to focus on general capacity building, reviewing farmers needs and supporting forums for dialogue. These have not addressed the fundamental underlying issues, one of which is the farmers' unions not providing members with relevant services, such as market information and opportunities for value addition.

Through this assignment, ZAGP is providing support to some of the farmers' unions to improve their capacity to better serve their members, attract more members and generate revenue for the unions.

Key activities under this assignment include:

- Working with the unions to identify the key elements they want from a digital platform.
- Reviewing existing available digital agricultural platforms for their key facilities and strengths.
- Selecting and implementing a comprehensive digital information platform for farmers' unions in Zimbabwe.

TA-ZAGP is in the process of carrying out a study to identify the services farmers' unions want their membership to be provided with. Focus is also on identifying what existing platforms might be worked with to enable the unions to provide these services.

UPCOMING EVENTS






ZIMBABWE AGRICULTURAL SHOW (ZAS) 2019

Harare Exhibition Park | 19 - 24 August 2019



"Creating a modern, prosperous livestock and agricultural sector in Zimbabwe".

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) will be participating at the 2019 edition of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show (ZAS). The programme will be showcasing work being undertaken under the six projects focusing on beef, goats, poultry, pork and dairy value chains, animal health and food safety and research, education and extension.

This year's edition of the national agricultural show will run under the theme, *"Technology, Innovation, Modernisation: Adopt, Accentuate, Accelerate."* The ZAGP exhibition will be set up under the Livestock Section within the Exhibition Park.

**IN THE NEXT
ISSUE OF
ZAGP NEWS**

The September issue of ZAGP News will focus on the Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE) project. We will provide an insight into the project's approaches on building the capacity of smallholder farmers to improve their goat and pig breeds and mobilise themselves to access viable markets.